

Storm Report #2 – Tuesday Evening January 21 (9:30pm)

(Smyrna) – A State of Emergency and Level 1 Driving Warning remain in effect for the entire State of Delaware, declared at 2pm by Governor Jack Markell, who previously ordered state offices closed at noon, sending all non-essential personnel home. The Delaware Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated at noon, and Governor Markell has issued a verbal authorization permitting the Delaware Guard to take responsive and precautionary actions directed by the director of the Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA), in consultation with Department of Safety and Homeland Security Secretary Louis Schiliro, upon request by local authorities.

The Delaware Code defines a Level 1 Driving Warning in this manner: “Level 1 Driving Warning: A “Level 1 Driving Warning” shall mean that any person operating a motor vehicle when a Level 1 Driving Warning has been activated shall exercise extra caution in the operation of their motor vehicle. Nonessential employees, regardless of whether employed by a public or private entity, are encouraged not to operate a motor vehicle on the State’s roadways when a Level 1 Driving Warning has been activated, unless there is a significant safety, health or business reason to do so.”

The National Weather Service says significant snowfall will taper off through the overnight period from west to east as bitterly cold air settles into the area. As the storm continues to get stronger, winds will become gusty, which will result in areas of blowing and drifting snow. As the storm moves out of the area, bitterly cold air will continue tonight and Wednesday.

In New Castle County, the Winter Storm Warning continues in effect until 6am Wednesday morning, while the Wind Chill

Advisory will be effective from 1am until 11am Wednesday.

Snow amounts are forecast from 8-14 inches in New Castle County. The higher amounts of snow will generally be closer to the Delaware River. Snow will taper off overnight. Travel will remain hazardous due to snow covered roadways, low visibility and drifting, and will continue through Wednesday morning. The commute on Wednesday morning will be impacted by blowing and drifting snow, especially in open areas. In the meantime, winds will be out of the north at 15-25 MPH with gusts open to 35 MPH, changing later to northwest. Temperatures will be in the teens, dropping to single digits overnight, and wind chills will be as low as 15 degrees below zero.

For Kent and Sussex Counties, the Winter Storm Warning remains in effect until 6am Wednesday, while the Wind Chill Advisory will be effective from 1am until 11am Wednesday.

Snow totals in Kent County are now forecast at 6-8 inches, with 4-6 inches expected in Sussex County. Snow will gradually taper off overnight, but travel will be hazardous because of slippery roads, low visibility and blowing and drifting snow. Those conditions will affect the Wednesday morning commute.

Actual snow accumulations vary from nearly 9 inches near Hockessin (Northern New Castle County) to less than an inch near Selbyville (Sussex County) with just over 3.5 inches in the Dover area (Kent County).

Winds will come from the north at 15-25 MPH, with gusts up to 40 MPH, then move from the northwest. Temperatures will fall from the teens to the single digits, with wind chills as low as 15 degrees below zero.

The speed limit on Interstate 495 has been reduced to 45 MPH. In Kent County, major roads are covered with snow, ice and slush, with heavy snow falling at times. Major roads in

Sussex County are generally reported to be wet with light snow, and a minimal accumulation so far. All bridges are open, but the speed limit on the Delaware Memorial Bridge has been lowered to 30 MPH.

There have not been any reports of widespread power outages in the state; however residents should be prepared in the event that high winds and snow accumulations bring down power lines.

All school districts in Delaware will be closed on Wednesday, January 22nd.